



THE GIZ - BRIGHTERMONDAY
SOFT SKILLS TRAINING MANUAL



THE TRAINEE'S GUIDE

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PRE LECTURE ACTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS

In order for you to get **verified** as a BrighterMonday Softskill Trainee, you will need to

1. Start by taking the **Baseline Assessment** BEFORE taking the training in a *classroom setting* or by studying the training material online *individually*,
2. COMPLETE the training in a *classroom setting* or by studying the training material online *individually*,
3. Once you have FINISHED taking the training in a *classroom setting* or by studying the training material online *individually*, then take the **Endline Assessment**.

What you stand to gain by taking the Baseline Assessment:

- A VERIFIED badge on all job applications which you make via BrighterMonday
- Prominent visibility in the “eyes” of the hiring managers
- Increased ability to perform on the job

When you are ready, take the Baseline Assessment by clicking on the link below:

- [**BASELINE ASSESSMENT**](#)

Alternatively, scan this provided QR Code using your smartphone to view and take the Baseline Assessment



INTRODUCTION



BrighterMonday Kenya and GIZ Agri-Jobs 4 Youth launched an empowerment project for young people in Kenya.

The project is dubbed Vijana na Kilimo (Youth and Agriculture) and it will improve the livelihoods of the youth through

1. Offering career services such as CV writing services
2. Provide job fairs to help the Kenyan youth access job opportunities
3. Offer soft skills LECTURE so as to help the youth better conduct themselves during interviews and generally gain job readiness skills and social competencies.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HARD AND SOFT SKILLS

Hard Skills: Technical abilities that can be easily quantified

Examples:

- Ability to speak in English
- Ability to do bookkeeping
- Ability to manage a farm
- Ability to drive a tractor

Soft Skills: Abilities required for workplace interaction

Examples:

- Ability to communicate fluently
- Ability to solve problems
- Ability to be productive at work
- Ability to better plan & organize

VIDEO TUTORIALS



Click to watch:

 [Hard Skills vs Soft Skil...](#)

Scan to watch:



PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Write down **three things** you hope to gain from learning about soft skills?

PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND TIME MANAGEMENT

TOPIC OBJECTIVES

- By the end of the course, you should be able to:
 - i. **Introduce** the concept of self-awareness and why it is important in Personal effectiveness
 - ii. **Develop** ways to improve self-confidence
 - iii. **Overcome** obstacles to effective time management

LECTURE NOTES

WHAT IS PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

- This refers to making the best use of your time and making use of the resources at your disposal, in order to perform to the best of your ability in your workplace, business or environment.
- Personal effectiveness is the ability to make a positive impact on others by conveying ideas and information clearly and persuasively (McCrimmon, 2018)

HOW TO IMPROVE PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS:

- Ownership: Taking ownership of your work, not blaming anyone but taking responsibility, and being result-oriented.
- Execution: Delivering your work with speed, purpose, and accuracy. Pay attention to details
- Discipline: Doing what you say you will do and when you say you will do it whether you feel like it or not.
- Learning Agility: Curious, open-minded, change resilient, and continuous learning

TYPES OF SELF AWARENESS

- **Internal Self Awareness:**

represents how clearly we see our own values, passions, aspirations, fit with our environment, and impact on others.

- **TL:DR:** How well you know yourself

- **External Self Awareness:**

means understanding how other people view our values, passions, and aspirations

- **TL:DR:** How well you understand, how others see you

HOW TO BECOME MORE SELF AWARE

- Uncover your blindspots- Ask questions; Why? What?
- Spend time getting to know yourself. What are your likes and dislikes?
- Listen more than you speak
- Practice Mindfulness – Everything feels better when you are calm. Pay attention to your thoughts. Observe, how you think. Pause, and reflect before engaging others.

HOW TO OVERCOME LOW SELF CONFIDENCE

- Self Acceptance - Accept yourself as you are
- Self Belief - Remember the fearlessness you had as a child
- Self Image - All that matters is how you see yourself
- Self Esteem - It is important that you feel good about yourself
- Self Talk - what you say to yourself matters the most
- Self Analysis - Focus on what you have and your strengths rather than what you do not have

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE TIME

- **Write out your daily** plan ahead of time (can use a diary, excel, word, sticky notes, app, or a calendar), your daily plan must be SMART that is specific, measurable, actionable, reliable and time-based.
- **Learn when to say NO.** Remain consistent with your goals and committed to your planned schedule! Understand it is humanly impossible to be available to everybody at the same time
- **Recognize obstacles that exist**, identify them, and employ strategies to overcome them. Make a list of possible threats to the flow of your schedule (e.g. KPLC power cuts or internet downtime). Make the most of your free time to overcome mediocrity. For example, Read and develop your skills, Explore your talents, etc
- **Always reward your success.** Could be as simple as checking off that to-do list. Rewarding yourself keeps you motivated and ready to get back to being productive

VIDEO TUTORIALS



Click to View:

[▶ How to Prioritize Tasks E...](#)

Scan to View:



Click to View:

[▶ Self Management Ski...](#)

Scan to View:



PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Activity: Break down your daily activities into **Low Yield** and **High Yield**

centers.

- Low Yield: A collection of activities that requires your time and energy to undertake but have *little returns*. E.g. betting then losing
- High Yield: A collection of activities that requires your time and energy to undertake but have *huge returns*. E.g. learn a new skill

| Low Yield Activities | High Yield Activities |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
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Outcome: Focus on investing your time and energy in those activities that *yield the highest return* (High Yield activities)

PERSONAL NOTES

SUMMARISE YOUR KEY LEARNING HERE

CREATIVITY, CRITICAL THINKING, AND PROBLEM SOLVING

TOPIC OBJECTIVES

- By the end of the course, you should be able to:
 - i. **Understand and apply** critical thinking skills
 - ii. **Identify** core skills associated with Critical thinking
 - iii. **Apply** critical thinking skills to problem-solving
 - iv. **Evaluate** 'arguments' and separate facts from assumptions
 - v. Make **fast and effective decisions** and generate solutions that work.
 - vi. **Build your credibility** and a solid reputation as an intelligent and indispensable person.

LECTURE NOTES

WHAT IS CREATIVITY

- Creativity is the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. It's the ability to imagine or invent something new.
- Creativity is not the ability to create out of nothing, but the ability to generate new ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing ideas.
- Creativity is an attitude to accept change and newness, play with ideas and possibilities, and look for ways to improve things. It is also a process that requires hard work and commitment.

THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY CREATIVE PEOPLE

- Mindfulness of other people's perspectives
- Question Everything
- High level of curiosity
- Constant experimentation and exploration
- Self-remembering
- Risk Takers
- Eliminate the fear of failure

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR CREATIVITY

- Associating: Drawing connections between questions, problems, or ideas from unrelated fields
- Questioning: posing queries that challenge common wisdom
- Observing: Scrutinising the behavior of customers, suppliers, and competitors to identify new ways of doing things
- Networking: Meeting people with different ideas and perspectives
- Experimenting: Constructing interactive experiences and provoking unorthodox responses to see

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING

- Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally about what to do or what to believe.
- It includes the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking in order to make sound judgments.

THE 6 QUALITIES OF A CRITICAL THINKER

- Observational - This is a critical thinking skill learned from childhood. It's our ability to perceive and understand the world around us.
- Curious - Being inherently inquisitive and interested in the world and people around you is a hallmark of a critical thinker. Instead of taking everything at face value, a curious person will wonder why something is the way it is.
- Objective - Good critical thinkers are able to stay as objective as possible when looking at information or a situation. They focus on facts, and on the scientific evaluation of the information at hand.
- Analytical Thinker - Critical thinkers challenge themselves to identify the evidence that forms their beliefs and assess whether or not those sources are credible.
- An Active Listener - Critical thinkers don't just want to get their point across to others; they are also careful to engage in active listening and really hear others' points of view.

WHAT IS PROBLEM-SOLVING

- The process of working through details of a problem to reach a solution.
Problem-solving can be a gauge of an individual's critical thinking skills.


THE 5 STEPS OF PROBLEM-SOLVING

- Identify the Problem - Understand the main causes of the problem. The focus is on root cause analysis.
- Develop Solutions - Generate potential solutions. Do not stick to popular solutions, look into new solutions and list them.
- Selection a Solution- Make a specific and detailed plan to carry out the chosen solution(s).
- Execute the Solution- Step by step and with a positive attitude carry out your plan to implement the chosen solution(s).
- Assess the Results - Perform an analysis of how well the problem was solved and adjust where required, then iterate

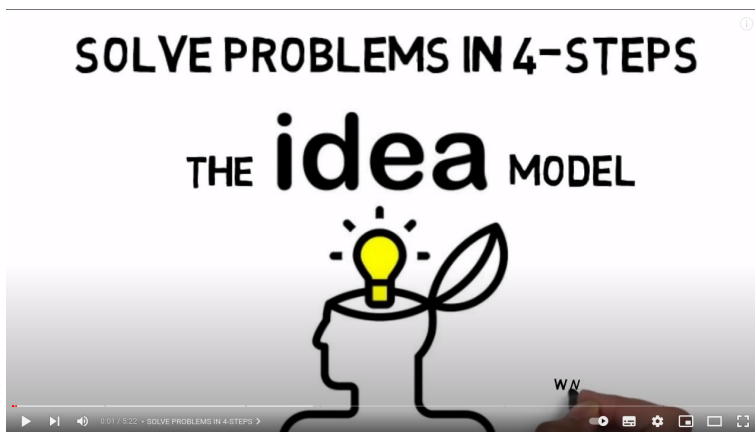
VIDEO TUTORIALS




Click to View:

 [Five simple strategies to sha...](#)

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Click to View:

 [How to Solve a Problem in ...](#)

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PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Activity: Using the words “conspicuous”, “franchise”, and “bonus” write a short story (500 - 700 words).

Write here....

Outcome: Finding a way to create an interesting, cohesive story from seemingly random words can improve your ability to make connections and combine ideas that don't necessarily relate.

PERSONAL NOTES

SUMMARISE YOUR KEY LEARNING HERE

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

TOPIC OBJECTIVES

- By the end of the course, you should be able to:
 - i. **Identify** key elements and principles of communication
 - ii. **Develop** active listening and empathy skills towards others
 - iii. **Learn** the effects of non-verbal messages and what it is telling others
 - iv. **Ability** to describe their own communication style and strengths.

LECTURE NOTES

WHAT IS EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- A process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, knowledge and information between two or more persons wherein the intended message is successfully **delivered, received, and understood** with **feedback**

THE 7C'S OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- **Clear:** Make the objective and purpose of your message clear. Avoid complex words and phrases
- **Concise:** Keep it clear and to the point. Avoid filler words and unnecessary jargon
- **Concrete:** Be specific, not vague. Use facts and figures your support your message
- **Correct:** Try to avoid typos. Use correct facts and figures. Use the right level of language
- **Coherent:** Does your message make sense? Ensure it flows logically. Avoid covering too much
- **Complete:** Each message must have a clear conclusion in order to make proper decisions and make action plans.
- **Courteous:** Being polite builds goodwill. Ensure your message is respectful, sincere, and enthusiastic

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY WRITE EMAILS

- Practise being clear and straight to the point with your message.
- Before sending, always re-read your message and always check for grammar and misused words.
- Avoid shortcuts, smileys, and abbreviations in business email messages.
- Don't copy unrelated recipients. Hence, respect email privacy.
- Mention your attachment in the content.
- Experimenting: Constructing interactive experiences and provoking unorthodox responses to see

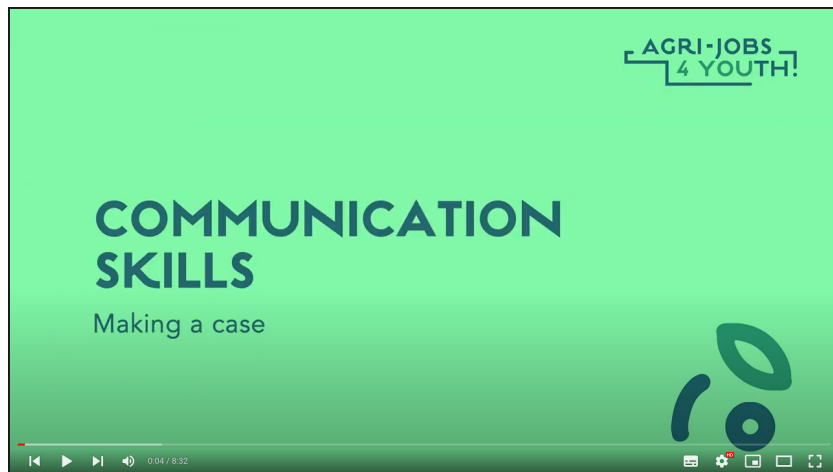
HOW TO ACTIVELY LISTEN AND GET THE POINT

- Summarising and paraphrasing what someone has said
- Being patient
- Maintaining appropriate eye contact
- Ask clarifying questions
- Paying attention to body language and tone of voice
- Encouraging the speaker: using non-verbal techniques like nodding, smiling and minimal responses such as “I see”, “really”


HOW TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

| LANGUAGE | FRAME OF REFERENCE | EMOTIONS | DISTRACTION |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>Language has different levels of meaning. Therefore, use specific words, good grammar and clear fluency. Avoid spelling errors, slang and abstract language</p> | <p>People have unique experiences, backgrounds, and cultures. Your way of seeing the world is not the only way; therefore, be open to shopping your message to the receiver's perspective.</p> | <p>Present logical not emotions arguments. Misunderstandings are less likely if you arrange your ideas logically and use words precisely</p> | <p>Focus on what is important and shut out interruptions. Have an important conversation where there is little noise and disturbance. Use white space to visually focus your message.</p> |

VIDEO TUTORIALS



Click to View:

 Making a case

Scan to View:



Click to View:

 Verbal communic...

Scan to View:



PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Activity: In 500 - 700 words, write a story about a time when you got something that required extra thought to buy (e.g. an article of clothing, an accessory, a cell phone, or an mp3 player).

Your story should clearly indicate the key **Characters**, the **Conflict**, the **Struggle**, and the **Goal**

Write here...

Outcome: Identifying key **Characters**, the **Conflict**, the **Struggle**, and the **Goal** while storytelling will help you better express yourself in an engaging and convincing way.

PERSONAL NOTES

SUMMARISE YOUR KEY LEARNING HERE

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE & TEAMWORK

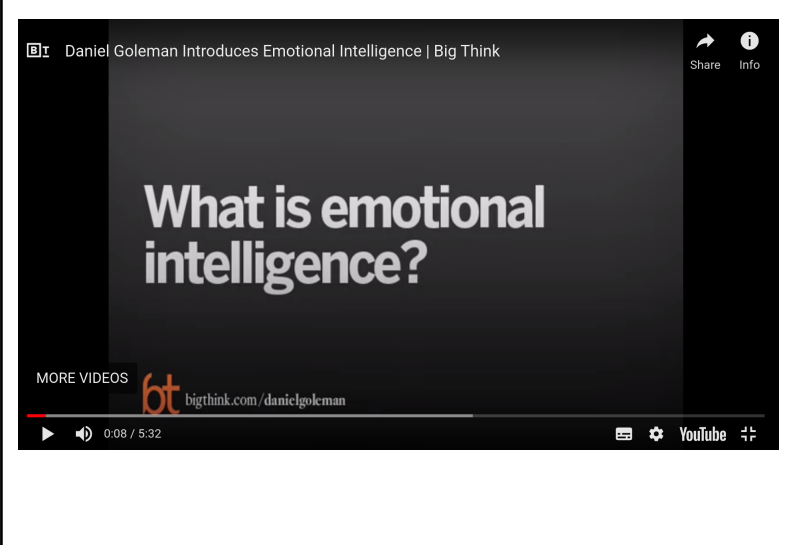

TOPIC OBJECTIVES

- By the end of the course, you should be able to:
 - i. **Discover** what emotional intelligence is and why it is so important for your career
 - ii. **Understand** behavioral styles and how to work with the different styles
 - iii. **Identify** the signs of high and low EQ in yourself and those around you
 - iv. **Identify** the importance of working in a team

LECTURE NOTES

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- Refers to the ability to **recognize**, **interpret**, **process**, and **control** emotions in yourself and others.

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THE 4 COMPETENCIES OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

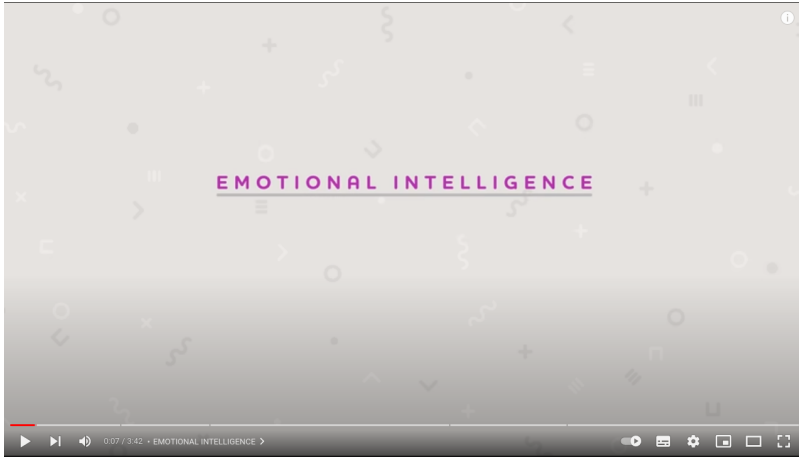
| Competency | Sub-competency |
|--|---|
| <p>Self-awareness: Recognizing and understanding our own emotions, captured in the competency</p> | <p>Emotional self-awareness: The ability to understand our own emotions and their effects on our performance.</p> |
| <p>Self-management: Effectively managing our own emotions</p> | <p>Emotional self-control: The ability to keep disruptive emotions and impulses in check and maintain our effectiveness under stressful or hostile conditions.</p> <p>Positive outlook: The ability to see the positive in people, situations, and events and our persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks.</p> |

| Competency | Sub-competency |
|---|--|
| | <p>Adaptability: Flexibility in handling change, juggling multiple demands, and adapting our ideas or approaches.</p> |
| | <p>Achievement orientation: Striving to meet or exceed a standard of excellence; looking for ways to do things better, set challenging goals, and take calculated risks.</p> |
| <p>Social awareness: Recognizing and understanding the emotions of others</p> | <p>Empathy: The ability to sense others' feelings and perspectives, taking an active interest in their concerns, and picking up cues to what is being felt and thought.</p> |
| | <p>Organizational awareness: The ability to read a group's emotional currents and power relationships, identifying influencers, networks, and dynamics.</p> |
| <p>Relationship management: Applying emotional understanding in our dealings with others</p> | <p>Influence: The ability to have a positive impact on others, persuading or convincing others in order to gain their support.</p> |
| | <p>Coach and mentor: The ability to foster the long-term learning or development of others by giving feedback and support.</p> |
| | <p>Conflict management: The ability to help others through emotional or tense situations, tactfully bringing disagreements into the open, and finding solutions all can endorse.</p> |
| | <p>Inspirational leadership: The ability to inspire and guide individuals and groups to get the job done, and to bring out the best in others.</p> |
| | <p>Teamwork: The ability to work with others toward a shared goal; participate actively, share responsibility and rewards, and contribute to the capability of the team.</p> |


HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- Spot-check your feelings to understand your emotions at any given time.
- Control your impulses and think before you act.
- Maintain an optimistic outlook despite the obstacles and setbacks.
- Try as much as possible to look at things from the perspective of the other person.
- Persuade by proving your positive impact and not by brute force
- Get a coach or a mentor which you can look up to and get advice from
- In the event of a conflict, go for a win-win approach that collectively ensures everyone goes with “something good home”

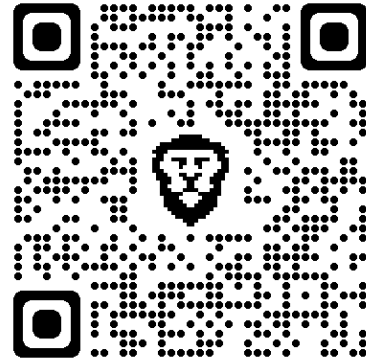
VIDEO TUTORIALS



Click to View:

 Developing Emotional In...

Scan to View:



Click to View:

 Effective Teamwork

Scan to View:



PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Activity: Think of a time when you were **ANGRY** and how you handled it.

Describe your reaction and feelings at that moment. Then, describe how you would like to process your reaction and feelings in the future.

The last time I was angry I...

The next time I am angry I...

Outcome: This exercise will help you understand your emotions when things do not go in your favor and make the right decisions.

PERSONAL NOTES

SUMMARISE YOUR KEY LEARNING HERE

MODERN EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

TOPIC OBJECTIVES

- By the end of the course, you should be able to:
 - **Understand the importance** of a good CV
 - **Know how to** prepare an Effective and contemporary CV
 - **Understand and apply** ATS (Applicant Tracking System) standard practices.
 - **Understand how** to answer tough interview questions
 - **Answer** Basic questions as regards CV writing

LECTURE NOTES

WHAT ARE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

- Employability skills are those core behaviors and skills that make a real difference when you're applying for and progressing in a job

THE CHECKLIST TO PREPARE YOUR CV FOR THE APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEM

- Carefully tailor your resume to the job description every single time you apply.
- Optimize for ATS search and ranking algorithms by matching your resume keywords to the job description
- Use both the long-form and acronym versions of keywords
- Keep your resume simple. Use fonts like Helvetica, Garamond, Calibri, Cambria, Open Sans
- Use standard resume section headings like "Work Experience" rather than being cute or clever ("Where I've Been")
- Avoid submitting your resume as a PDF unless the system specifically lists PDF files among the acceptable options.

GENERAL CV WRITING TIPS

- Tailor your CV to each job advert by using the exact keywords and skills mentioned in the advert
- Keep your CV short and simple.
- Only include relevant information
- Clearly state your achievements and how you achieved them. If possible, quantify the results achieved
- Check for spelling and grammatical errors on your CV
- Be honest. Do not include jobs you did not do or false achievements.

COVER LETTER STRUCTURE

THE INTRO

Paragraph 1 (2 sentences)

Who are You
How did you find the
application
What you are applying for

THE SUMMARY

Paragraph 2 (3-4 Sentences)

Summary of Your
Knowledge, Skills,
Experience

THE PITCH

Paragraph 3 (3-4 sentences)

What's Your magic
What connects you to the Industry,
Company and Job
What makes you fit and why should
you be hired.
Show your knowledge about the
company and culture

THE CLOSURE

Paragraph 4 (1-2 Sentences)

Resume attached
Call to action Intent to follow up
Thanks

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: CURRICULUM VITAE

How long should my CV be?

- It depends on how much experience you have and what level of candidate you are. If you're an entry-level candidate, a page should be plenty. For more experienced candidates, it's fine to have a longer cv between two to three pages long.

What should I not include in my CV?

- Please leave out personal information that includes your age, gender, nationality, and religious belief. Always remember to include your name and contact details.
- Avoid Lying or misleading information on your cv. Recruiters can spot information that does not add up. Such as achievement and qualifications.
- Avoid First-person language ("I," "we" or "me"): A recruiter will know your resume is about you so use action words (Manage, develop, oversee, etc..) to describe your achievements.
- Include only positions that are either relevant to the job you're applying for or are necessary to show a certain length of employment history.

What are CV Keywords and where and how should I use them?

- Keywords are words or phrases that describe specific job requirements and are the abilities, skills, expertise, and values that the recruiter is looking for in a candidate. Review job descriptions that are similar to the positions you are interested in and look for keywords to incorporate into your cv.
- For example, if the company identifies itself as "creative," you could incorporate "creative" and "creativity" in your cv.
- Another example, if the job description includes words like "agronomy", "agribusiness", "project management" and so on, make sure you incorporate them in your CV.

What should I do to ensure I have a good CV?

- Start with a summary of your skills and key achievements. This will attract the recruiter and grab their attention from the outset.
- Make your CV stand out by emphasizing your results, and using numbers and data to show your achievements. So for example, instead of saying “ *Worked in the field performing various agricultural functions in order to cultivate crops and ensure their high quality was maintained.* ” write “ *increased crop harvest by 38% by working in the field performing various agricultural functions in order to cultivate crops and ensure their high quality was maintained*”.

Should I send my CV as a word document or a PDF document?

- You should generally send your resume as a word unless the recruiter requested a copy in pdf format.

What should I write if I do not have experience in the field I am applying to?

- When you've limited or no work experience, use your educational history as a focal point of the CV. Represent the qualifications you have achieved as well as describe examples of coursework completed and include any specific accomplishments from your educational history
- Also include any volunteer experience you might have done that could be relevant to the role being applied for.

Do I need to include personal information, such as interests and hobbies?

- Some companies may look favorably on CVs that include hobbies and interests as they might help employers connect with you on a personal level. Adding hobbies and interests can support a resume with little to no professional experience.
- Should occupy the final section of your cv and be listed with a small descriptive sentence for each item. For example “ Farming: Make decisions, control the finances, and tend to livestock, learning about the day to day farming operations.

Should I include my primary education on my CV?

- Never include your primary education on your cv. If you are still in high school, only have a high school certification, or are in the first few years of college you can include your high school information.

Should I attach a photograph of myself to the CV?

- It's recommended to avoid adding a photo to your cv.

Should I describe my roles in the past or present tense?

- If you're writing about the responsibilities for a job you currently have, your CV should usually be in the present tense. However, if you are talking about jobs you previously had, write about those completed tasks in the past tense.

How many references should I list on my CV?

- You should provide at least three references on your CV. The first one should be your current or former employer, and the second can be someone who knows you well in a professional or academic setting. The third is optional and can be either a former employer or someone who knows you well in an academic setting.
- Always ensure that your referees remember you and are aware that they do appear in your CV for reference purposes. Also, make sure you are well informed on their current professional roles and contacts in case they have changed them. List your Referees with the following information:
 - Name
 - Current Job/Position
 - Company/Institution
 - Phone Number
 - Email Address

Should I list my salary expectations on my CV?

- Do not include your salary requirements on your cv or cover letter if you have not been asked to do so by the employer. These things are better-discussed face-to-face during the interview stage.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: COVER LETTER

Should I include my Cover Letter with my CV each time I apply for a job?

- You should always consider submitting a cover letter, even if it is not required. A well-written cover letter gives you a chance to sell yourself to the employer in a narrative format, and explain why you are an ideal candidate.

What to include in a cover letter?

- Here's a list of things you should include in your cover letter.
 - Your name and contact details
 - Their name and contact details
 - The name of the job you're going for: You can do this on a line by itself (for example, 'Regarding: Application for Farm Manager position. You can also do this in the opening paragraph (for example, 'I am writing to apply for the recently advertised Farm Manager position'.
 - A list of your relevant skills
 - A summary of why you're right for the job
 - Ask them to contact you; Try something simple like, 'I have attached a copy of my resume. I look forward to hearing from you about this job'.

How long should my cover letter be?

- Keep it short. A cover letter is meant to be a summary of your CV, so don't write more than one page.

What should I write about on the cover letter if I do not have any experience?

- Though it may be challenging, it is possible to write a cover letter even if you have no related work experience. You can focus on any soft skills you've gained from other experiences like extracurricular activities, educational courses, or volunteering.
- Proofread for spelling, grammar, and clarity issues

Should I use the same cover letter for each application?

- Customising your cover letter for each application doesn't mean you have to create a new cover letter from scratch for every opening. However, the more customised your cover letter is to the job, the better the chance a recruiter will want to continue onto your cv.

How do I write a cover letter if I do not know the name of the recruiter or the hiring manager?

- There's nothing wrong with contacting the company by phone or email and asking the name of the hiring manager. Be professional and explain why you need the information. Tell the individual you're about to apply for a position and need to know to whom to address the cover letter.
- You can also use an alternative greeting. Address your letter to "Dear Hiring Manager." This works as a last resort, as will the salutation "Dear Hiring Team." Reserve these greetings for when you have no idea who the recipient of the letter will be.
- **Side Note:** If you are considering using Dear Sir/Madam. It would be recommendable not to. Because Sir or Madam is considered to be impersonal, outdated, and not gender-inclusive. But if one wishes to use it one should use proper punctuation and capitalization: "Dear Sir or Madam," or "Dear Sir or Madam:"

JOB SEARCH PROCESS

Narrow your focus considering the following:

- Have a career goal
- Identify your industry and desired role
- Identify your type of organization
- Choose the right platforms or sources of job postings e.g LinkedIn, BrighterMonday
- Update your job search tools (resume, cover letter, [BrighterMonday Profile](#), etc.)
- Build your network!

WHAT TO DO DURING THE INTERVIEW PHASE

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Before The Interview | Research the company Background |
| | Prepare questions and explanation of your CV |
| | Look sharp and smart (well presentable) |
| During The Interview | Listen carefully to the interviewer |
| | Relate your skills, accomplishments, and objectives to the needs of the company. |
| | Provide specific examples |
| | Ask questions at the end of the Interview |
| After The Interview | Follow up with the interviewer(s) with a phone call or email |
| | Ask about your interview performance |

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ANSWERED UNCOMMONLY WELL

| QUESTION | MEANING OF QUESTION | VERSION(S) OF THE QUESTION | POINTS TO NOTE | PITFALLS TO AVOID | SAMPLE ANSWERS |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| <i>Tell us about yourself?</i> | Do you fit the profile of our ideal candidate? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information about you should we know? • What do we need to know about you? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is one of the most frequent interview common questions asked during interviews. • Your interviewer basically wants to get a feel of your academic credentials, work experience, skills, and career achievements. • They have obviously gone through your CV, but need to hear it from you. This is a chance to give a pitch and convince them that you would be the best candidate for this position. • Arrange your thoughts in three parts where you introduce your experience and skills, state achievements and successes, and end with | Steer away from giving too much information. Stick to facts and relevant information. Remember that it is an interview and not a social chat. | I am a customer service team leader heading a team of 8 officers for 3 years now in the Insurance industry. I have a degree in Business Management, and a certificate in Customer Service, and I have undergone several Customer Service and Customer Relationship Management workshops. My team mainly handles insurance claims from customers and coordinates with relevant insurance companies for settlements. I was awarded Best Customer Service Officer at the end of my first year in the job, and I have been recognized in my company as the Team Leader of the Year two years in a row. At this point, I envision the |

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|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| | | | <p>a projection of your next step in your career.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cohesive flow of thoughts is critical because mixing up events shows disorganization or possible dishonesty. | | <p>next step in my career in different industries like yours is to experience your kind of clients and improve my exposure to handling customers.</p> |
| <p><i>How did you hear about this position?</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you specifically search for our company or did you stumble on the advert? • Are our advertising methods working? • Are we searching in the right pool? | <p>Where did you get information on this job?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is one of the most frequent interview common questions asked during interviews. • Your interviewer basically wants to get a feel of your academic credentials, work experience, skills, and career achievements. • They have obviously gone through your CV, but need to hear it from you. This is a chance to give a pitch and convince them that you would be the best candidate for this position. | <p>Steer away from giving too much information. Stick to facts and relevant information. Remember that it is an interview and not a social chat.</p> | <p>I am a customer service team leader heading a team of 8 officers for 3 years now in the Insurance industry. I have a degree in Business Management, a certificate in Customer Service and I have undergone several Customer Service and Customer Relationship Management workshops. My team mainly handles insurance claims from customers and coordinates with relevant insurance companies for settlements. I was awarded Best Customer Service Officer at</p> |

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange your thoughts in three parts where you introduce your experience and skills, state achievements and successes, and end with a projection of your next step in your career. • Cohesive flow of thoughts is critical because mixing up events shows disorganization or possible dishonesty. | | <p>the end of my first year in the job, and I have been recognized in my company as the Team Leader of the Year two years in a row. At this point, I envision the next step in my career in a different industry as yours to experience your kind of clients and improve my exposure to handling customers.</p> |
| <p>Why do you want this job?</p> | <p>Why did you apply for this position?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you want to work here? • Why are you interested in this position? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interviewer only wants to ascertain that you actually want to join their team for a valid reason. • To answer this question in a way that will create impact, look at it as an opportunity to showcase how your skills match perfectly with the organization's culture, vision and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You failing to mention the company when answering this question is an immediate red flag to the interviewer. Yes clearly you have skills and your experience is acceptable, but if you cannot say how your skills will benefit your | <p>I have always wanted to be part of a team that makes a tangible difference in people's lives like your organization does. When I saw the advert, I was drawn to the qualities your ideal candidate should have and I realized I possess them all and it would be my career dream to put them to work.</p> |

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| | | | <p>values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can also portray how you joining the team fits in with your ultimate career goal and how enthusiastic you are at the opportunity. | <p>interviewer's company they lose interest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving away too much information is unnecessary. You don't need to state how the company is close to your home, or how you will have an easy time dropping your children to school due to flexible working hours. All this is irrelevant. You talking about your current or previous employer negatively. Even if you hate working at your current company, your interviewer doesn't need to know. | |

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| <p><i>Why should we hire you?</i></p> | <p>We have hundreds of applications for this position. Why should it be you that we choose?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is it about you that makes you stand out? • Why do you think you are the best candidate for this job? • What are you bringing in this role? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always remember that the interview is not about you, but the company getting the best talent the market has to offer. The best approach is aligning existing skills and experience to the company's needs and current pain. • The interviewer wants you to convince them that you are worth the recruiting trouble. They want to be sure that you can perform and that out of all the applications they have received, their best shot is seated right in front of them. • The interviewer needs to know that you will be an excellent addition to their already existing team. • They are, most of all, out to scout and recruit the best talent because it will | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come off as overconfident and even corky. This usually rubs your interviewers the wrong way. Answers like " Because I am awesome. I will give 101% of myself to this role and turn sales around. I am definitely the best candidate you have met so far and I don't think you will meet anyone better." • Overselling yourself to look like their most desirable candidate. This includes lying about your qualifications, skills, and experience. The truth will eventually be known and the consequences may | |

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| | | | <p>make them look good at what they do and also make their work in the office easier.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not be too modest about your previous or current achievements. Throwing in a success story in your pitch will earn extra points for you. | <p>be dire for you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most common mistake that candidates make in the face of such a question is to panic and fail to recognize the rare opportunity to market their skills. They then result to whinny answers that sound desperate and self-deprecating. These answers are like; “ Well, uh, I have a degree, I am intelligent and I have integrity. I am eager to do anything assigned to me and I would really like to join your team.” | |
| <p>What are your greatest professional strengths?</p> | <p>Is the candidate self-aware</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you think sets you apart from other applicants? Why should we hire you? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-awareness is very critical in candidates during interviews. When interviewers ask about your strengths, they want | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid making a long list of strengths. You should have at most five strengths that you can elaborately | <p>I possess outstanding customer service and interpersonal skills. Apart from the routine courteous conversation with clients</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why you? • What can you say makes you the perfect fit for this position? • What are your professional strengths? | <p>to ascertain that the candidate is self-aware and more importantly can relate their skill set to the role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your interviewer wants to identify qualities, skills, and experience that is only unique to you or that you master really well. It is hence, your best time to shine. • Your interviewer is also keen on your communication skills. Your thought process when answering this question is key. Ensure your thoughts flow coherently. The secret to this is planning ahead. Ensure that you have a shortlist of your most relevant strengths at your fingertips. | <p>define and give examples of instances where you applied these strengths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not give irrelevant strengths. For instance, saying you can walk on your hands for 400 meters while interviewing for an accountant position. Every strength you list should be tied to the current position. • Ambiguous answers should be avoided at all costs. Know your specific strength and have specific examples to accompany these strengths. • Avoid the temptation to give canned answers. These | <p>and follow up, I used to go an extra mile to find solutions for unprecedented client problems. Once, one of our driver called and reported a stalking case that was likely to result in him delivering some merchandise to a client 2 hours late. I called the client and informed them of our predicament. They were understanding and even asked where our truck was so that they could pass by and collect the package. This way, we averted unnecessarily inconveniencing an esteemed customer.</p> |

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| | | | | <p>backfire in your face when asked to elaborate and you realize mid-sentence that what you are trying to explain has nothing to do with you or the position in the discussion.</p> | |
| <p>What is your weakness?</p> | <p>Is this candidate self-aware? Can they be problem solvers?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you consider your greatest weakness? • Do you have a weakness that we should know about? • If you were given the power to change one trait in yourself, what would it be? • If your previous employer was asked to name the one thing you need to work on, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your interview has been on that side of the table for a while. They have asked this cliché question over and over and are probably praying at the moment that you don't give them one of those canned answers like ' I am a perfectionist. • Your interviewer also wants to find out if you are self-aware, so don't make the mistake of saying you don't have any weaknesses. It shows an utter lack of self-awareness. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having one weakness in mind such that when the interviewer asks for another weakness the candidate looks at them like a deer caught in the headlights. • Giving weaknesses that are completely unrelated to the position and fumbling for words when asked how these weaknesses hinder performance. This portrays you as a | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Answer 1: As a manager, I have realized that I tend to micro-manage and rarely delegate due to fear of my team members messing up a project. I have realized that this eats up most of the time that should be spent making strategies. I also realized that I am denying my team growth opportunities by learning from their mistakes. I have begun making conscious |

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| | | <p>what do you think they'd say?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your interviewer knows you are wearing an interview mask that will eventually fall off once you are employed. They would like to get a peek at what the real picture looks like. A good weakness should be fixable and you should be able to follow up with a statement saying how you are working on it. It should be authentic and acceptable for the position you are applying for. You should define your weakness in a concise but impartial way. Going too much into detail may make you sound defensive. | <p>fibber.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving weaknesses that deflect responsibility to you and make it sound like you are blaming others. E.g "I don't like it when people don't communicate." That is not a weakness but a result of a circumstance. | <p>decisions to delegate and even though work output is taking longer, I feel that teamwork is more enhanced now in my department and I have cleared my workload for more strategic planning. I also started taking managerial workshops that help me discover how else I can improve my team's performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample Answer 2: I feel that I still have some ground to cover in public speaking. When called upon to present in front of large groups I get flustered and extremely nervous. I have been conducting research on ways to improve and I have gained a few tips that I |

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| | | | | | <p>am implementing. I also suggested to my manager that he allows me once in a while to introduce him in conferences. With time, I believe I will be able to confidently speak in public with no problem at all.</p> |
| <p>What is your greatest career achievement?</p> | <p>Do you work on deliverables? Can you identify when you attain your deliverable?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which accomplishment are you most proud of? If you were to retire today, which project will you look back at your retirement party and feel absolutely accomplished? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the most important behavioral interview question your interviewer will ask. The answer you give not only provides an insight into your values, but a peek at your commitment, tenacity, persistence, and ability to prioritize. Your answer should be related to your career. If you are a beginner, talk about something you did that stemmed out of passion; like volunteering, or how you exceeded your | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being unprepared for this question is a guaranteed failure. If this question finds you by surprise you will stumble through the answers and will most likely forget items that might actually make you stand out. Have more than one achievement, in case the interviewer is more interested in your projects. Avoid giving | <p>I have had several outstanding achievements throughout. My most recent and what I consider the most outstanding is when I led my department in winning the Customer Service Award in the region. I lead a customer service team of 15 members. Our services are carried out via phone, email, and various social media platforms. We launched a social media</p> |

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| | | | <p>supervisor's expectations during your internship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● You can also talk about a particular roadblock at work that you overcame. Success in handling customers or suppliers can also be termed an achievement. ● Your answer should highlight the processes that led to you attaining the achievement in question. ● Ensure that you have your three most cherished achievements and their details at your fingertips just in case the interviewer is interested in knowing more. ● Make sure your achievements are tangible and measurable. E.g in sales give actual numbers, in customer service state awards are | <p>achievements that are not related to your career or the position you are applying for.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do not give negative achievements. For instance, stating how funding for projects in your previous employment was always pulled out at the last minute which resulted in massive layoffs and you achieved this by avoiding the layoffs. ● Achievement is usually something outside your normal job description. Do not state how you performing what is expected of you as an accomplishment. E.g do not say 'I was never late for the | <p>campaign early last year and by the time competition for the award was set in motion at the end of the year, we already were a force to reckon with. We already had overwhelmingly positive reviews and there is a marked improvement in sales as a result of customer referrals. Credit for the award goes to my team for unique and creative problem-solving solutions, immediate response to queries 24 hours a day, timely and effective follow-up, and pure raw passion for customer satisfaction. I am proud to have led such an incredible team and I hope to bring with me the same passion and enthusiasm for customer service.</p> |

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| | | | <p>given and if certificates are available, present them. However, be careful not to give away confidential information that might not only present legal consequences to you, but also make the interviewer wary that you have confidentiality issues.</p> | <p>whole of last year.' Or 'I handed in all my accounting reports in time.' Your interviewer wants to hear how you helped take the department you were into another level, not how you helped maintain the status quo.</p> | |
| <p>Where do you see yourself in the next 3/5/7/10 years?</p> | <p>Do you actually have a plan for your career or are you just gliding through life</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your growth plan? • What direction do you envision your career to take? • What do you seek to achieve in the course of your career? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interviewer is checking to ascertain that you have a career trajectory planned out for yourself. They want to know that you are ambitious and that you seek growth because growth for you means maximum utilization of your talents which will culminate in growth for their company. • The interviewer wants to know how the position | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumping to long-term goals without stating the short-term ones, such that you are viewed as building castles in the air. There is nothing wrong with you planning to be the managing director of the company. Unless you are already in a senior management position, mentioning | <p>I am keen on becoming the best I can be in what I do. I am seeking opportunities that expose me to further development of my skills, become involved in interesting projects, and be part of a team that I can learn immensely. Based on my research, your company is a force to reckon with in the industry, and some of the biggest contributors to</p> |

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| | | | <p>you are interviewing for fits in your grand career plan. This means that if you hold the position you are interviewing for in high regard, it translates to you performing well in the roles assigned. It is a show of commitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the position falls in your great career plan, you are likely to be enthusiastic about it and excited by the growth opportunities it presents, hence you will be constantly motivated and are likely to face challenges positively. • Therefore, the paths you have set out should be realistic and actionable in relation to the industry your career falls in. • Your goals should also be realistic depending on the stage at which you are in your career. Where | <p>that you would like to be MD may seem a bit far-fetched. Specifically state short-term goals that will help build the long-term ones.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving goals unrelated to your career like telling the interviewer how many children you look to have in five years. Remember that interviews are always about the company and all your answers should be geared to how you are going to be a value add to the company's goals, vision, and mission. • Giving rigid plans and goals. When an interviewer gets the impression that you | <p>innovation in the industry work here. For me, that is my greatest motivation to build my career.</p> |

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| | | | <p>beginners straight from college may be forgiven for giving somewhat unrealistic projections, individuals who have been in the industry for some time will not be dealt with equal leniency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your goal should be targeted. Do not use tired lines like "I see myself in a management position" Your answer should be truthful, reasonable, and fluid with departmental limits. This means that you should give a perception of flexibility and the ability to take up more roles apart from those listed in the advert. Remember that your interviewer has their ideal candidate in mind and are looking for the closest match to that. You shouldn't come across as | <p>have a specific path that you have your mindset on, they think you cannot be persuaded to take on additional tasks and become wary. E.g saying " I would like to be a CEO, with at least 5 people reporting to me, earning 200k per month, paid vacations, and a company car.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overthinking this question will make you nervous and you will end up with a blank head. Ensure that you have practiced answering this question ahead of the interview. | |

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| | | | <p>rigid or being a round peg in a square hole. You will lose out in opportunities for growth and exposure.</p> | | |
| <p>What does your former boss say about you?</p> | <p>What was your relationship with your former boss like?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I contacted your former or current boss, what is the one thing they would say about you? • Can I contact your former boss? • Would your former boss recommend you for this position? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is your chance to highlight all the praises your former boss gave you • Do not say that your former boss should not be contacted because it shows that you had a bad relationship • Focus on selling your key strengths • Do not say that your relationship with your former boss was bad or ended badly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not badmouth your former boss • Painting a picture of a very strained relationship | <p>My former boss and I had a very fruitful working relationship. We worked closely on several projects with them mentoring me closely. I learned many things from them and went ahead to execute several projects highly and I am sure my skills be missed. As such, my boss highly recommends me for the position and would particularly highlight the fact that I am hardworking, dedicated, a fast learner and most of all, I always ensure that I complete my work on time.</p> |

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| <p><i>Why do you want to leave your current job?</i></p> | <p>Have left your previous job on good terms? What kind of relationship did you have with your previous employer and colleagues. What is your personality, and credibility and can you relate well to people?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you want to leave your current job? • Would your former colleagues recommend you for this job? • What skills do you bring on board from your current/previous job? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest and tactical when giving your answer • Focus on your positive contribution to your former boss • Some situations are beyond your control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not say that your current workplace is toxic/unfavorable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Answer 1: I have worked at company X for three years and was awarded the best employee of the year for my exemplary performance in teamwork and problem-solving. Having successfully achieved that, I am ready for another challenge with your company and to offer my expertise in X field for the overall benefit of your organization • Sample Answer 2: I have been working hard for the past five years in a similar position, improving on key skills that are critical to this new position and creating a |



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| | | | | | <p>consistently positive impact on the organization. With this in mind, that is the reason I am really keen to find a senior position with your company. Your company also offers an ideal environment and practical exposure that will allow me to be fully committed to this position and based on my track record, I am confident that i will meet the company's objectives.</p> |

POST LECTURE ACTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS

Now that you have FINISHED taking the training in a *classroom setting* or by studying the training material online *individually*, you only need to take the **Endline Assessment** so that you can get:

- A VERIFIED badge on all job applications which you make via BrighterMonday
- Prominent visibility in the “eyes” of the hiring managers
- Increased ability to perform on the job

When you are ready, take the **Endline Assessment** by clicking on the link below:

- [**ENDLINE ASSESSMENT**](#)

Alternatively, scan this provided QR Code using your smartphone to view and take the Endline Assessment.

